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# The Jewish Quarterly Review.

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JANUARY, 1892.

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## H. GRAETZ, THE JEWISH HISTORIAN.

FOLLOWING on the fall of the first Napoleon, came a period of European reaction in which the sun of Jewish favour suffered a temporary eclipse. In many directions the emancipation of the Jews was stayed, and their hard-won and dearly-prized rights threatened. But there was this difference between the old and the new, between the mediæval and the modern trouble. The Jews had recovered courage and found voice ; they dared to speak in their own behalf, and Europe was ready to give a fair hearing to their defence. At the moment when the hour sadly needed the man, was born one whose works were destined to plead eloquently for the people he loved, to enshrine its past in volumes of enduring value, and to show what manner of future its present foreshadowed.

Hirsch (or Heinrich) Graetz was born at Zerkow, in the province of Posen, in 1817. His early life, however, was passed at Xions, to which place his parents removed soon after the birth of the future historian.<sup>1</sup> His experiences at school were not altogether agreeable ones. The principles on which the training of the Jewish youths of the district was then conducted may be seen from the method of the Rabbi of Zerkow, about whose eccentricities so many

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<sup>1</sup> For the facts of Graetz's early years, I am indebted in great part to the information supplied by Mrs. Graetz, and to Dr. Rippner's articles in Brüll's *Monatsblätter*, 1887.

anecdotes are current. It is said that on every Friday afternoon he would range his pupils in a line and regularly proceed to flog them all in order. If any embryo philosopher among them, with a sense of what was just, protested against his unmerited beating, the teacher would reply, "If you have so far done nothing to deserve it, you are certain to do something sooner or later." Graetz does not seem to have come under a pedagogue of this character at first, for his earliest studies were directed by one for whom he felt a keen affection. When, however, he had passed beyond the elementary stages, he fell into the hands of a man who thought that the proper instrument for opening a lock was a hammer and not a key. A sensitive child could not thrive under such a system, and, as legend says of Maimonides, Graetz acquired throughout the town a general reputation for stupidity. But a liberator soon appeared on the scene. His former teacher, who had a high opinion of Graetz's abilities, one day suddenly entered the school-room, and without a word to the presiding tyrant, bodily carried off his beloved pupil.

Graetz remained with his parents in Xions for some years, but his mother then took her son to the neighbouring town of Wollstein, her own birthplace. She was the daughter of a *dayan*, and knew that her son would be thoroughly grounded in the Talmud in Wollstein. In that town, too, she had relatives, and to their charge she committed the boy, whose talents it was by that time impossible to doubt. He passed an interval of some duration in Wollstein, where he studied the Talmud and also attended the Gymnasium. But the methods pursued in the study of the Talmud, and the one-sided training of those to whom this instruction was committed, could not fail to dissatisfy a clever lad who had imbibed the new together with the old. The time had come for Graetz, now growing to manhood, to find a teacher who would combine a reverence for the Talmud with an appreciation for modern culture and scientific method. Such a teacher he thought he had found in Samson Raphael

Hirsch. Hirsch had unfurled the banner of enlightened conservatism in Oldenburg, and was attracting to himself a number of young and gifted Jews who were eager to reconcile the old and the new; who were devotedly attached to traditional Judaism, and yet could not regard without loathing the narrow policy that would shut off Talmud students from a knowledge of the world and of its literature. Graetz remained in Oldenburg for some years, and the love for Judaism which already animated him was strengthened by contact with Hirsch's vigorous enthusiasm. Later on, the teacher became his pupil's critic; but that was when the cleavage between parties had become more pronounced. In Oldenburg Graetz completed his preparation for the University, and then proceeded to Breslau, in 1840, where he graduated and for a time settled. He had in the interim become acquainted with the lady whom he afterwards so happily married.

Graetz's first appearance as a writer occurred in 1844-5. Chiefly in the latter year he contributed to Fürst's *Orient*, a periodical which contains much of permanent literary value, two series of critical articles directed against Geiger's *Lehrbuch zur Sprache der Mishna*. These essays at once brought the writer into prominence. The learning, the style, and the control over large masses of material, which distinguished his later work, are already displayed in his earliest production. The verdict pronounced on Geiger's work was immoderately severe, and this is not surprising. To Graetz, the suggestion of Geiger that the language of the Mishnah was an exotic, the product of the schools, was intolerable. This language was a natural growth, and so far from embodying an ossified, artificial, and merely learned terminology, responded to the thoughts and consciousness of the people. Even at this early stage of his literary activity, Graetz gave evidence of his appreciation of the crying need for a comprehensive grasp in the treatment of the history of Jewish tradition. The settlement of every special point in that history, he maintained, pre-

supposed the capacity to deal with all points. In his defence of the Rabbinical writings, Graetz offered, too, the acute remark that the Talmud wreaked its revenge on those who scoffed at it by remaining a sealed literature to them. Two points call for notice in this first essay of Graetz. It is a striking fact that Graetz made his *début* practically as the champion of orthodoxy. This attitude, when contrasted with the view presented in the fourth volume of his history (1853), seems to betray a glaring contradiction. But it must be remembered that the real and fundamental divergence which existed *ab initio* between the schools of Frankel and Hirsch only gradually revealed itself. At first, all who felt an attraction towards traditional Judaism, were ranged together on one side. In the presence of the common enemy, their private differences were ignored, or rather, were overlooked, for reform was laying the axe at the very root of the tree. But it was not long before the allies settled in separate camps. "Orthodoxy" and "Historical Judaism," which had at the outset seemed synonymous, were found to constitute very different things, for while the one party became ever more orthodox, the other became ever more historical. On the theoretical side, the historical school recognised no fixed dogmas; on the practical side, the oral law consisted of a series of customs or *minhagim*. This attitude became very clear when Frankel, in his *Darke Hammishnah* (1859), explained *halachah le-Moshe Missinai* to mean old halachoth dating from immemorial times. Hirsch, Auerbach, and others of his party instantly proclaimed Frankel a heretic, for with them these halachoth were actually revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai, and were as divine as the Decalogue itself.

In the second place, Graetz's hostile judgment on Geiger's book led to reprisals. Graetz was himself the object of a strong attack in an organ of the Liberal party, *Der Israelit*, in which a clever, but bitter attempt was made to cast ridicule on the youthful critic. Whether this article was

actually written by Geiger may be doubted; Graetz himself thought so, and indignantly resented the personalities with which he was assailed. But like the subsequent invective of Hirsch (1855-6) from the opposite side, this attack was far from proving detrimental to Graetz. Surely, one whom it was thought worth while to assail in this manner must be a man worthy of note; personalities are not usually hurled except against personages. The relations between Graetz and Geiger were never cordial in after years, but this early passage of arms prepared the learned Jewish world to receive with attention Graetz's first independent work, *Gnosticismus und Judenthum*, which appeared in 1846, and established his reputation as a historian from whom much was expected. Previously, his progress had interested the community of Wollstein; the hopes in him had now ceased to be local. In his work on Gnosticism, Graetz showed how the influence of the gnosis had found its way into Jewish circles, and how even the Tanaim had either accepted or combated it. To the former category belonged Acher, and in a more limited sense, Ben Azai and Ben Zoma; to the latter, Akiba, who alone of the four came safely through the hazards of a journey through the "Paradise" of Gnosticism. The *Sefer Yetsira* was, according to Graetz, the work of Akiba; but he subsequently abandoned this opinion. With characteristic honesty he calls attention to this change of view in the fifth volume of his History (p. 281).

Graetz soon afterwards removed from Breslau to the small Austrian town Lundenburg, in Moravia, where he filled an unimportant post as director of a school. Here he was free from the turmoil of party conflict, and, like Saadiah in his desert exile, steadily amassed materials and made preliminary studies to serve the great purpose which he had already planned. These six years were not, however, unproductive, and the essays that he published during this period of retirement indicate the direction of his thought. An essay on the "Septuagint" (1845), with

special reference to its religious interest, had preceded, but papers on "Jewish History" (1846), the "Current Methods of treating the Talmud," "Studies in Jewish History" (1852), "Talmudic Chronology and Topography" (1852-3), are among his contributions to Frankel's periodical publications subsequent to the appearance of his *Gnosticism*. It was expected by many that Graetz would become a "Rabbiner," but this was not his destiny. It has been argued that the world gained by this fact, in that the Rabbinical office to a certain extent robs a man of his independence, and may compel him to withhold from the world part at least of the truth. This would be a valid enough argument had Graetz remained unattached; but it is hard to see how he enjoyed as teacher at the Breslau Seminary greater freedom than he would have possessed as Rabbi. In fact he *was* somewhat trammelled by his official position in after years, though he but hinted at his discontent. In his lecture before an English audience in 1887 he used these words: "There are at present, thank God, seminaries for Jewish theology, in which these studies [viz., 'Biblical Exegesis,' 'Talmud,' 'Philosophy and Ethics,' 'History and Archæology'] are pursued, in London, Paris, Berlin, Breslau, Amsterdam, Buda-Pesth, and recently also in Rome. But, for various reasons, the teachers at these institutions cannot deal with these studies with that thoroughness which modern science demands. Even the teachers would be glad to have the results worked out for the purposes of their own teaching. Only such scientific workers as are *entirely free from every yoke* can produce really academic results." This was Graetz's feeling when he had long earned the right of free speech, and he was too clear-headed to fail to see that his position in the seminary was not one that permitted him the luxury of complete independence. If he was not himself a Rabbi he was the producer of Rabbis, and the deference which he was spared from owing to a congregation of his own, he felt constrained to show to the prejudices and sentiments of congregations

over which his pupils would preside. There is some injustice, therefore, in the charge of reticence that is levelled against Graetz. He could not forget that the seminary would suffer for his sins if he offended by speaking out his whole heart. He was too chivalrous to willingly force others to fight his battle with him; and whether that battle was against anti-Semitic professors from the outside, or against discontented co-religionists from the inside, Graetz asked to stand alone, so that if he fell, on his head would come the disastrous consequences. How victoriously he passed through the ordeal, how he single-handed maintained his position, his whole later career proves. Genius always implies a certain element of solitude. Graetz was indeed no recluse, and his ideas were not those of a bookish student. His marriage was a very happy one, and his beloved wife shared his aspirations and his triumphs. But outside his family circle, Graetz made none of those intense friendships which have given completeness to the lives of lesser men. Graetz won the admiring regard of the many rather than the love of the few, and this isolation, due in part to the unapproachable height to which his fame raised him, in part to his regard for the interests of others, was easily mistaken for mental reserve.

But the Breslau seminary was only a dream when Graetz settled in Lundenburg. In the interim he was working at the fourth volume of his history, the volume which was the first to see the light. With this MS. he went to Berlin in 1853, and readily found a publisher in Veit. Scholars and "general readers" agreed in hailing the new history as a work of genius. It brought the Talmudic heroes to life again, and it promised to perform the same service for the even more dimly seen and imperfectly understood Jewish worthies of later times.

Throughout the twelve (or rather thirteen) volumes of his history, Graetz's astounding mastery over his materials, his lucidity, his vigorous style, his power of vivid description, are as remarkable as his minute learning, his pains-



taking quotation of authorities, his ingenious and complicated yet sound combination of apparently disconnected facts. He worked on a gigantic scale, yet there was no scamping of detail. But this conscientious accuracy alone would hardly have saved his work from becoming obsolete. He added and altered in later editions it is true, he expanded and withdrew, though in the latter process he was more sparing than in the former. But his work has remained on the whole unaffected by the course of time, for he had given it immortality by his living imagination. The time has gone by when to attribute imaginative power to a historian would be tantamount to attempting to discredit him and his work. Graetz was himself the wandering Jew, whom he himself so well described.<sup>1</sup> "You might call him the youngest brother of Time. This wandering Jew understood all languages, knew all Christian and Moslem dynasties, their rise and fall, their follies, and their aimless actions. He had been at the Court of Vespasian, and spoke of the catastrophe that brought about the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem. This wandering Jew had passed through the tortures and horrors of the Inquisition in Spain, Portugal and Rome, and at this his auditor is astounded, as at a miracle." But Graetz's past had been even more of a miracle than this.<sup>2</sup> He had been redeemed amid marvellous signs of God's love and his anger from Egyptian bondage, he had wept by Babel's streams when in a second exile he thought of Jerusalem; with the heroic Hasmonean brothers he had fought and won his people's liberty, he had been led in chains to grace the triumph of his Roman conqueror. With the martyrs of all ages he suffered; he was assaulted by the soldiers of the Cross, and well-nigh perished by the hand of those whom the Black Death had spared; he stood by while his brethren were driven from England and exiled from Spain;

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<sup>1</sup> Lecture before Anglo-Jewish Exhibition, 1887.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Prof. Kaufmann in the *Pester Lloyd*, September 12th, 1891.

he saw them fall before the Cossacks' unbridled violence; when the new Jerusalem opened its doors to his race he too took ship to Holland with them; when England's shores were no longer forbidden soil he trod them too. He was at Sinai when the law was given; he sang psalms with David; became a Hellenist in Alexandria and a Tanaite in Babylon, a poet in Spain and a philosopher in Cairo; shared the enthusiasm of Jehuda Halevi and the troubled wanderings of an Ibn Ezra in search of a home and of truth; with Spinoza he merged his being into the All-being, with Mendelssohn he craved free air and found it, with Heine he laughed and cried by turns.

It has become almost a commonplace to speak of Graetz's History in this way; and if he so affects his Jewish readers it was because he felt deeply what he expressed so strongly. Graetz's "History of the Jews" itself belongs to Jewish History; it is no longer possible to dissociate the facts from the narrative. Some of his critics were unable to appreciate the truth of Graetz's reconstruction of the past; they thought him arbitrary and, slow of perception themselves, maintained that he seized upon incidental points and converted them into characteristics. "What does Graetz know of the character of Jochanan ben Zakkai? What *can* Graetz know?" naïvely asked Hirsch, in 1856. Ten years before Graetz had dedicated his work on Gnosticism to Hirsch, "the high-minded champion of *Historical Judaism*, the unforgettable teacher, the fatherly friend." But now Hirsch discards his pupil and will have none of him, for he had sought to write the history of Jewish tradition. With Hirsch the Rabbis were simply the bearers of tradition, with Graetz they were in a sense its creators also; or rather they developed the tradition as they bore it on. Here we see the rift between Orthodoxy and Historical Judaism betraying its presence; hence the discord between master and pupil. As Graetz proceeded with his history, volume by volume, he was attacked from other sides. He was supposed to have slighted his prede-

cessor, Jost, and he certainly spoke with some disrespect of Zunz in the original preface to his fifth volume. But in the preface to Volume I. Graetz described Zunz as a "Genialer Kritiker," and he had some ground for resentment if it be true that Zunz, when asked for his opinion on the merits of Graetz's early volumes, remarked that Jost had already done the work as well. In 1870, when publishing a second edition of Volume V., Graetz omitted the reference to Zunz which had aroused so much animosity, and in his eleventh volume he did posthumous justice to Jost, as he had done to Basnage in Volume X. It was hardly Graetz's fault that his own "History" so entirely superseded those of his predecessors that they are now practically unread. That Geiger should prove a severe and unfriendly critic was only to be expected, but it is rather hard to understand why so loud a charge of plagiarism was raised against Graetz. There never was less of a plagiarist than Graetz. The truth is, that the specialists thought themselves plundered if the historian seized upon one of the minute facts that they toilsomely collected, fitted it in a proper setting, and gave a place in history to what had before been an item entered in a bibliographical index. Though Graetz was as sound a specialist in every field as any of them in one particular domain, facts were not of value to him just because they were facts; they only became truly important when they had been classified and placed. When in the course of his 6,600 pages he did occasionally use chips from other people's workshops to give completeness to his own mosaic, he was sharply called to account, while his own creations were pilfered by others to an almost incredible extent, and yet he never uttered one word of protest.

If Graetz had a weakness in this matter it was that he systematically refrained from quoting, at least by name, those who had treated him ill or whom he thought his foes. There are, as Carlyle pointed out, Artists in History and Artisans, men who work mechanically in a definite depart-

ment without eye for the whole, "not feeling that there is a whole; and men who inform and ennoble the humblest department with an idea of the whole, and habitually know that only in the Whole is the Partial to be discerned." But Carlyle, wrong in supposing that it was impossible to find the two functions combined, was absolutely right in distinguishing between them. Graetz, it may be soberly said, was at once Artist and Artisan; he had acquired a manual dexterity for parts, yet retained his control over the whole.

What Graetz perceived was that History included "the art of interesting the affections and presenting pictures to the imagination." How else should its philosophy teach than by examples? Hence the efforts that Graetz put forward were turned in this direction; to interest his readers in his heroes, to make them realise who they were, and what they did. There is nothing more brilliant in the pages of secular history than Graetz's character sketches; his Solomon Molcho, his Moses Chayim Luzzatto, his Samuel the Prince, Immanuel of Rome, John Pfefferkorn, Gracia Mendesia Nasi, Pablo Christiani, Saad-Addaula, Don Pedro (whom Graetz refuses to nickname "the Cruel"), Dunash ben Labrat, and the "burrowers" Uriel da Costa, Leon Modena, and Joseph Del-Medigo—to mention a few of his *dramatis personæ* who played lower than leading parts. Graetz always maintained that, though it was the duty of the historian to trace identities in the course of events, so as to enable him to explain their current logically, it was as clear a part of his function to detect contrasts, and to set these contrasts in a prominent light. In both these directions, the life-like portraiture of persons and the due admixture of light and shade, Graetz succeeded admirably, and almost universally. Where he somewhat erred was, on the one hand, in his habit of making a striking epithet do the duty of a more humdrum, but, perhaps, more complete verbal picture; on the other hand,

in what looks like a conscious aim at *discovering* contrasts beyond the mere duty of *describing* them when found. There is something a little irritating in Graetz's constant harping upon his epithets ; scarcely a man in his pages but has his character labelled on to him, and the label never by any chance slips off. In the eleventh volume of his history this labelling of men who had lived near enough to our own times to still belong to the realm of party politics, naturally excited violent attack. But the habit runs through the whole work, like a golden thread that has become here and there frayed, and has been bound together with less valuable material. Graetz's love of contrast is also shown throughout ; whether he is setting the Kabbalists against the philosophers, or a Holdheim against a Zacharias Frankel. One cannot refuse a meed of admiration to the audacious and grotesque originality that could dare to set the names of Spinoza and Sabbatai Zevi together in the headings of two successive chapters—a rather extreme instance, which, however, the author bravely justified. Did it not arrest the reader's attention ; did it not fix in his mind most securely the directions of the very sharply opposed dangers that threatened at one and the same time to engulf Judaism ? Graetz's style is florid to excess, and is marred by the use of inappropriate and confused metaphors. But his vigour, his sureness of touch, and his eloquence are far more noticeable than his faults ; and if a certain sense of disproportion is felt in his treatment of successive epochs, this is rather due to the inequalities of the style than of the actual handling of the material. "His work," said Geiger, speaking of the earlier volumes, "contains *Geschichten*, which are loosely strung together, but are not *Geschichte*." Like many of Geiger's judgments, this utterance, prejudiced though it be, is at least partially true. But only partially. For it is but necessary to read the eighth and ninth chapters of Vol. VI., in which Graetz takes a wide and comprehensive survey of the pre-Maimunist condition of the Jews, in which the threads are gathered

from every land of East and West, and woven together into a brilliant many-coloured web, stretching wide as Jewry's own contemporary horizon—if these and similar chapters be read in the light of Geiger's criticism, it will be seen how little truth there is in it after all. Sir G. Trevelyan, in speaking of Macaulay's painstaking industry, recalls how Leonardo da Vinci would walk the whole length of Milan that he might alter a single tint in his picture of the Last Supper. Graetz would travel amid his books far greater distances than this to write a sentence; nay, to fix an epithet in those general summaries, the merits of which a child can appreciate and a learned scholar might envy. Like Macaulay, Graetz drew no pedantic distinction between the learned and unlearned; and this both historians accomplished by the "downrightness" and unequivocal tendency of their judgments on men and things. No one but a partisan can write impartial history; if by a partisan is meant one who judges careers by their consequences, and who refuses to accept the dictum that truth must necessarily be on the neutral border-line between parties—a border-line which, in many cases, has no more real existence than the Equator. Impartial history does not mean history that must please all parties, or remain indifferent to each.

In a word, Graetz wrote, not merely the History of the Jews, but the Philosophy of that History. "Why does he not narrate the facts; why must he always pass sentence on them?" These questions are often asked by readers in disparagement of Graetz, but the answer is not so hard to find as the questioners suppose. He cannot omit the verdict, because the present and the future of Judaism are conditioned wholly and absolutely by the past; because that past is never dead, but locks the present in its eternal embrace. A Christian historian might deal with Christian mysticism in a calmly scientific spirit; not so a Jewish writer with the Kabbala. The Kabbala holds sway still; its influences ramify throughout the Jewish ceremony and

belief of to-day ; it is yet a strong practical force for good or evil. Must not the Jewish historian unhesitatingly pronounce whether it be good or evil? Can he contemplate what its effects have been without condemning *it* too, without warning the future to steer clear of the follies of the past? Graetz had too little sympathy with the spiritual elevation produced by what he slightly designated *schwärmerei*; he slurred over the fact that the Kabbala itself was in some of its phases a mystic protest of pure religion against formalism, that neo-Chassidism was an ennobling enthusiasm, seeking direct communion with God, that many an imposter must have had fascinating elements of greatness in his character. To the glance of the philosopher of history, the excesses of the Kabbala leading to tyrannous slavery over the intellect, the speedy degeneration of Chassidism into the worst of formalisms, the cruel injuries inflicted on Jews and Judaism by these imposters, coloured the initiation of the one and the motives of the others, and in very sooth deserve the condemnation which Graetz meted out to them. Besides, Graetz would not allow Jewish history to repeat itself. A simple and naïve Rabbi was in place in the fifth century, but Graetz resented the recurrence of the type in the thirteenth. At the earlier date, Graetz found much to praise in the very class of men who, in their later guise of anti-Maimunists, were scornfully branded by him as "Stock-Talmudisten." The future will show that very few of his judgments will be reversed by the court of appeal of posterity. With his eleventh volume the matter stands otherwise. Here Graetz was a prophet rather than an historian; here he had to deal with causes which had not yet worked out their full effects. If this section of his work be not quite worthy of the rest, it is because, as he himself so often says in the book itself, when discussing the growth of controversies which still rage within Judaism, "*Wie es steht . . . gebührt nicht mehr der Geschichte zu erzählen; es gehört der unmittelbaren Gegenwart an.*"

Alas, that he should have to conclude the fifth volume of the forthcoming English edition of his History, with a similar statement regarding German anti-Semitism.

The publication of Graetz's History occupied the author for many years; indeed, between the issue of the first edition of Volume IV. to the issue of the third edition of Volume VIII., there extends an interval of nearly forty years (1853-1890). Excepting the fourth volume, all the early parts of the first edition were produced under the auspices of Philipsohn's "Institut zur Förderung der israelitischen Literature," which has a glorious record of useful and brilliant work. In the meantime, however, the author had done much in other fields; and it is time that we resumed the thread of his career.

A most important incident in directing the current of Graetz's activity was the foundation of the Breslau Seminary in 1854. The need for such an institution was pressing. After a sleep lasting for three centuries the awakening had come, and with it an inevitable period of bewilderment. A strong feature in the Mendelssohnian movement was the effort to arouse once more among the Jews that love for secular learning, that refined desire to speak the literary languages of Europe, which had distinguished the Jews before the period of dismal desolation that followed in the wake of the Black Death. Civil rights were in part gained, a wave of enlightenment spread over the Jewries of the West, and for the moment blinded their denizens with excess of light. Jewish learning was pursued by a few scattered enthusiasts, such as Rapoport and Zunz, but serious internal divisions threatened to wreck Judaism when the ship which had weathered so many storms was well within sight of port. How fallen was the state of Jewish learning may be seen from the preface of Graetz's *Gnosticism*, in which the author actually apologised for offering a volume which did not deal with any of the controversies raging at the moment between Jewish parties. The Cheder and the Yeshiba had lost their hold on the



eager youth of Germany.<sup>1</sup> Prague, Frankfort, Furth, Metz, and Hamburg, which had attracted *bachurim* by the hundred, could now count their Talmud students by units. Great Rabbis like Jacob Lissa, Akiba Eger, and Moses Sofer still found many disciples, but the latest of these died in 1840, and left none of the same calibre to supply their places. At length leaders of all the Jewish parties in Germany realised the danger; Judaism needed a rallying-point, a Zion from which might go forth teachers of the Law. It was no longer possible to ignore the new conditions under which Judaism existed. There was but one alternative. Either the Rabbinical and other Jewish literature must be subjected to *scientific* treatment, or it must be allowed to fall into lasting neglect. It was no easy task to convert the Melammed into a Lehrer and the Rav into a Rabbiner; yet the former feat was successfully attempted by Mendelssohn's immediate disciples, the latter was the work of the new Jewish Rabbinical Seminaries.

Seminaries had been already established outside Germany, and the one in Padua, the first of its kind, had, since its foundation in 1827, produced good fruits. But the Breslau Seminary far surpassed its predecessors in importance and in the width of its aims. In Jonas Fränckel, Judaism found a noble benefactor, who, under the guidance of enlightened advisers, rendered an inestimable service to his religion. It is needless to recount the difficulties that delayed the accomplishment of his design, nay, threatened its very inception. Suffice it to say that conferences between recognised Jewish scholars and men of communal experience were held, formally and informally, during the years 1847-1854, and resulted in the inauguration of the Seminary in Breslau on August 10th in the latter year. Graetz was not the Director of the new institution; for that post there was but one fitting claimant, viz., Zacharias

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<sup>1</sup> Strassburger, *Geschichte der Erziehung und des Unterrichts bei den Israeliten* (Stuttgart, 1885), p. 231.

Frankel. But Graetz took part in the Dresden conference of March, 1853, at which the organisation and programme of the Seminary were settled. He never filled the position of Director, for the post was, I think, invariably conferred only on those who had already served as Rabbiner. But to the end of his life Graetz was the man who, in an especial sense, was identified with the high reputation that the Seminary gained. Of all the original staff of the Seminary, he remained longest at his post. Death claimed Frankel in 1874, and between that time and the present year several distinguished men have provisionally or regularly occupied the vacant headship. It was Graetz's presence, his name and fame, that secured the continuity which was so essential to the growth and development of the institution. Sad is it to think of the irreparable loss that the Seminary has now suffered. It is generally asserted that no man is indispensable. Let us hope that the Breslau Seminary will not be fated to speedily disprove this comfortable optimism.

As a teacher, Graetz possessed many merits. His lectures stimulated his pupils; he not only gave them a helping hand, but he taught them how to go alone. He was not dogmatic in the class-room; he encouraged his pupils to criticise his views in their periodical exercises, and he would smilingly listen while he heard his own published statements questioned. He would stimulate original research by the best of all means, for he would set for his pupils' treatment subjects on which the last word had not already been spoken. Or, again, he would select points that Jewish historians had already discussed; he would clearly indicate how far previous research had gone, and would suggest the directions in which fresh inquiry might be profitably pushed.<sup>1</sup> Teaching such as this goes far to account for the brilliant array of original work to which the Breslau Seminarists may proudly point. If one

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<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Rippner's remarks in Brüll's *Monatsblätter*, 1887, p. 246.

had nothing more to point to than the books written by the pupils of Graetz and of his colleagues, one would still have to assign the teachers a high place among the benefactors of Jewish learning.

The best justification of the Breslau Seminary lies in the scholars that it has produced during the past forty years. It has recently been said that a Rabbinical training college must produce men of character. This, it seems to me, is a fatal error. A college can produce scholars, it cannot manufacture saints. If it tries to accomplish the latter feat, it will gather in a fine harvest of hypocrites. Frankel and Graetz were under no such absurd delusion; their duty was to turn out Rabbis who knew something of Judaism, who knew a good deal of Jewish literature and philosophy, and this they did. Geiger certainly looked askance on the work of the Seminary, and he had some just cause for bitterness. He and Philippon more than any others were instrumental in persuading Jonas Fränckel to endow the new institution, yet he was excluded from the management. Not long after its inauguration Geiger resigned the Breslau Rabbinate, and transferred his enlightened activity to Frankfort. He described the Seminary as a cram-shop for Rabbis; but surely it was better that it should succeed in that than that it should try to become a cram-shop for cant. The "Breslau Judaism" was, indeed, a curious product of compromise; it would examine Jewish tradition, piece it out into its component parts, show how it developed, date it, but still loyally go on observing all that it enjoined as though Jewish science had never applied the crucible. In religious matters Graetz was fond of talking of the *juste milieu*; and for the Judaism of to-day extremes are no doubt dangerous. But to some of us it seemed as though Graetz, while equally condemning unbending conservatism and extravagant liberalism, found his *juste milieu* forsooth in *both* extremes, binding his conduct to the one and abandoning his thought to the other. There was origin-

ality no doubt in this species of compromise, but it need hardly be added it had no elements of permanency. It served its purpose of reconciling the old with the new for nearly half a century. But new phases of spiritual vacillation need ever new varieties of practical compromise, and these saving waters will be drawn by future generations of Jews from the deep unfailing well of truth that Graetz dug out, though it may be necessary to first remove the stone with which he himself covered its mouth.

The labour connected with the revision of his History, and his duties as teacher at Breslau, did not absorb the whole of Graetz's energies. He never ceased to correct and expand his great work, and lived to enjoy the unique gratification of publishing a fourth edition of one volume and a third edition of several others. But in the meantime he took some interest in the affairs of the Breslau community, and added to his other functions two important offices, the "extraordinary" professorship of history in the Breslau University (1870), and the editorship of the *Monatsschrift* (1869). The latter monthly was founded by Frankel, and at the time of its discontinuance, in 1887, had been in existence for thirty-six years. This was a very long life for a literary journal, and for the last twenty years of its existence it owed its vitality almost entirely to the contributions of Graetz himself and of his colleagues and pupils.

A complete list of Graetz's essays is given at the end of these pages, and a striking list it is. In one direction a certain poverty may be noted, even amid so much massive wealth. Few of Graetz's essays deal with the history of the Halacha, and the same omission may be charged against some portions of his History. The progress of the Halacha in Judaism after the era of the first codifiers was but lightly treated; yet the Talmudic Halacha received very adequate discussion in Graetz's volumes. The reason for this difference is easily found. The Halacha, after

the time of Alfasi, became more and more objective, while Graetz's glance, keen to detect every subjective trait that marked the characters of his heroes, somewhat turned aside from their objective religious life. There is the less ground for regret that Graetz pursued the course he did, for Weiss' *Dor dor Vedoreshov*, or History of the Jewish Tradition, might otherwise have remained unwritten. It is pleasing to find in Weiss' fifth and last volume, which was printed before the death of Graetz, so frequent a reference to the services rendered, even on the Halachic side, by the great Jewish historian.

Of the essays that Graetz contributed to the *Monatsschrift*, some were preparatory studies for portions of the History, but most were independent treatises, and some attained to the size and importance of set volumes. The topics treated are mainly historical or grammatical subjects, and points of Biblical exegesis. Some were quite popular in character, such as his "Shylock in der Sage" (1880) and "Die Schicksale der Talmud" (1885); for in the last decade of his life Graetz felt a strong impulse to reach the general community. One of Graetz's most meritorious performances was that he rescued Jewish science from becoming the property of the few. Hence his own "popular" edition of his History in three volumes, and the eagerness with which he lent his countenance to the translation of his work in an abridged form into English and French. These translations were not mere abridgments; he carefully re-read the chapters, and made frequent additions and emendations, sometimes of considerable moment. A work of his—the title of which would lead one to anticipate a book for the recreation of an idle hour—"Blumenlese neu-hebräischer Dichtungen" (1862), consists, however, entirely of Hebrew texts. In one of the poems occurring in this volume a printer's error disarranged the half lines, so that, as published, the verses make nonsense. It was amusing to find how this slip was pounced upon by Graetz's keen-eyed critics, who made very merry over the pro-

digious blunder! Referring to this poetry, Graetz well remarked in the preface:—"A people that was able to lament, to sing, and to laugh in rhythmic measures; that, moreover, possessed the faculty of pouring forth its feelings and thoughts in beautiful forms, is not spiritually dead. And these poets did not sing in solitudes, but found a numerous audience." These lines prepare us for the space devoted by Graetz in his History to the birth and development of Jewish poetry. Jewish history, he maintained, was a *Culturgeschichte*, and it may be safely predicted that this will be the direction in which most advance will occur in the near future. The social and "cultural" history of the Jews is far obscurer than their literary history, and the work of the future will be to light up fully, as one of Graetz's own disciples<sup>1</sup> has so ably done in part, the pages which even the master himself left dark.

Of the tourists who go to Palestine but few are Germans; and twenty years ago their number was even smaller than it is at the present time. To make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land was one of Graetz's most cherished longings; but it was not till 1872 that this hope was fulfilled. Popularity had not brought with it large pecuniary gains. His History was in every Jewish library, and in many a non-Jewish one; in George Eliot's, for instance. Yet the author of the work that rapidly earned a European fame was only in a position to visit Palestine after several years' careful saving. One often hears lamented the decay in the modern student-world of the devotees to letters who once made learning an end in and for itself, who served their master without thought of material recompense. Yet Jewish scholarship remains and must needs remain its own and only reward. In the spring of 1872 Graetz, with two companions, trod the soil sacred to a great memory. In Palestine the pilgrim sees what he is worthy of seeing. To

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<sup>1</sup> Güdemann: *Geschichte des Erziehungswesens*, etc. See also his Obituary of Graetz in the *Neue Freie Presse*, October 20th.

one it looks a desert dotted with poverty-stricken hovels; to another's eyes it is so many thousands of acres of soil needing scientific farming; to one a hope, to another a misfortune; to most of those who visit it, a place to die in. Graetz did not go to spy out the land, to make discoveries, or to identify sites. He went there to find courage. He went there to come into real contact with the scenes he had not yet dared to describe. With the Hebrew text in his hand to serve as guide-book, he fixed his gaze on the changeless hills, the eternal valleys; he heard the murmur of the streams, saw the bright sky reflected in its lakes, and as he looked he saw Joshua crossing the Jordan, he saw all the rush of incident that showed Providence working out its purposes through the chosen race as its instrument. "Love for the people to which I belong by birth and training, accompanied me on my journey; but I hope that the reader will not find that this love has misled me into partiality and disingenuousness." The desire to see Palestine with loving eyes was the author's own justification for commencing his History in the middle. Less honourable explanations have been suggested for this deferment by Graetz of volumes I. and II. It has been said that he felt constrained to wait until after Frankel's death before giving to the world his heretical views on the Bible. But his conduct needs no defence. The early history of Israel is interpreted in part by its later history; and moreover, the historian might be pardoned for relegating to the end the treatment of that portion of his work which demanded the most delicate touch, the most matured powers.

Graetz's visit to Palestine was not without its humorous side. While at Jerusalem he received a formal certificate of merit: he was promptly excommunicated by some local Rabbi. Twenty years ago these bulls were still plentiful, but no one took them seriously. Graetz would tell the story with keen enjoyment, and with a genial smile would relate how once, in a German watering-place, he went to

the Jewish restaurant to get his dinner. "O, I know you," said the good-natured landlady, "you are welcome, but you are a wicked man!" "How do you know that?" asked Graetz, with a smile. "I read it in *Der Israelit*," was the answer; but she gave him an excellent dinner. What might have proved a more serious conflict arose at an earlier date in Vienna, where an effort was made to suppress by aid of the law an essay in which Graetz called the doctrine of a personal Messiah into question.

The attempt to appraise Graetz's position as a Bible critic must be left to a future number of this REVIEW, and to a more competent judge. Graetz's editions of the *Psalms*, *Ecclesiastes*, and *Song of Songs*, the essays on other Scriptural passages which he contributed to his own and to other periodicals, and, above all, the forthcoming critical edition of part of the Hebrew text will, for a long time to come, form the theme for discussion. Day by day for many years Graetz was engaged on this last work, and our readers will be glad to learn that, so far as chapter xxiv. of the Book of Proverbs, the edition was left ready for publication.

The omission of all reference to the history of early Christianity in the first two editions of his famous third volume was explained by Graetz in the preface to edition three. The fifteen years that had elapsed had opened up a new field, and had clearly shown the importance of New Testament times as a page in Jewish history. Renan's *Histoire des Origines du Christianisme* had turned general attention to that period, and the critical problems connected with it had been more sharply defined and in part solved. In 1867 Graetz had published his *Sinai et Golgotha*, and two years earlier he expressed his hope that the time was near when no one would be permitted to write on the origins of Christianity who was unacquainted with the Jewish Hagadic literature of the first and second centuries, and who did not appreciate the Hagadic character of certain parts of the early Christian writings. It is no ex-



aggeration to say that the fourth edition of Graetz's third volume (1888), contains the best account of the material that Jewish scholarship has so far contributed to the subject.

Graetz was very little affected by personal abuse; he used strong language himself, and was not weak enough to cry out when others used the same instrument against him. But in 1879 he did reply to an attack that was levelled with equal violence and venom. He broke silence because the blow was aimed through him at the general body of the Jews of Germany. At the time of which we speak, German patriotism was in a very sensitive condition. Anti-Semitism had reached an acute stage, and the two weapons were hurled simultaneously against the Jews. Professor Heinrich von Treitschke wielded considerable influence in learned circles, and his anti-Jewish articles in the *Preussische Jahrbücher* attracted the more attention from the author's assumption of studied moderation. Graetz was singled out for attack. He was declared anti-German and anti-Christian; he was at once unpatriotic and filled with an insatiable hatred to Christianity, which he had described as the "Erbfeind." It was noteworthy that Graetz found few Jewish champions to plead his cause; but there was only one who in set terms discarded him, and weakly sought to shelter himself and other Jews behind the absurd argument that Treitschke had erred in calling Graetz's History "a standard work." Graetz, however, was fully able to defend himself, and his two articles in the *Schlesische Presse* (7th and 28th December, 1879) were as brilliant as they were triumphantly successful. His dignified tone, his protest against Treitschke's sin towards humanity, his brave justification of his own strong condemnation of mediæval persecution, were worthy of the great historian. He challenged his detractor to quote the passage in which he had applied the term "Erbfeind" to Christianity. He protested that he had uttered no word of disrespect against primitive or modern Christianity. "I had to deal with the past, I had

to relate the thousand-fold bloody and merciless persecutions which my brethren in race and religion suffered, and I sought to tell the story truly. Was I to falsify history? If you have read my history, can you point to an irreverent word in my account of early Christianity? I had to speak of later, of false Christianity, which had become loveless, hard-hearted and oppressive, which had given the lie to its Master's word of sympathy, love and humility. I had to describe the long drawn-out sufferings which this Christianity had inflicted on the Jews; I described them with a warm heart, and I spoke my thoughts freely." Indirectly Treitschke's charge of hatred to Christianity was shown to be ridiculous by the conduct of the Spanish Academy of History, which elected Graetz an honorary member.<sup>1</sup> The third edition of volume VIII. (1890) contains, in augmented form, the history of the Jews from 1205-1492, and deals largely with the martyrdom of the Jews in Spain and their final expulsion from both parts of the Peninsula. This volume Graetz, "*observantissimus ac grato animo*," dedicated to the Madrid Academy.

Treitschke could not fail to be keenly stung by an historian's appeal to an historian; a reply to Graetz's "open letter" was inevitable. He admitted that he was in error as regarded the "Erbfeind" incident; he could *not* point to the passage in which the term occurred. But he carefully picked out some expressions from Graetz's eleventh volume, in which Germany was roughly handled, and quoted a sentence in which Graetz actually said of a Jew converted to Christianity that "he went over to the enemy's camp"! On grounds so flimsy as these, Treitschke reiterated his charge against the German Jews in general, and Graetz in particular, of hatred towards their country and towards Christianity. "Herr Graetz is a stranger in the land in which it was his accident to be born; he is an Oriental who neither understands nor wishes to understand

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Güdemann: *Neue Freie Presse*. *Ibid.*

our people; he has *nothing* in common with us except that he possesses our rights of citizenship and uses our mother-tongue—for the purpose of calumniating us.”

Graetz, in his final rejoinder, exposed the weakness of Treitschke's Chauvinistic logic. He reminded his opponent that converted Jews did mostly “go over to the enemy's camp,” for the Jews had suffered cruel hurt from the persecution often instigated by their former co-religionists. And so he met Treitschke point by point, vindicating himself with combined dexterity and boldness. The paragraph with which Graetz concluded his unanswered and unanswerable defence, charmed all who had followed the controversy by its simple manliness. “I have now done. If the fancy suggests itself to you to return to the attack, you may slander and abuse me right soundly, for I will utter no further word of reply. One request I make of you. If you have a spark of conscience, do not hold my brethren in religion and race answerable for anything that I have written. If I have offended, I will alone pay the penalty.”

The manifold occupations of his later years left Prof. Graetz but little leisure for travel. Yet in June, 1887, he accepted the pressing invitation of the Committee of the Anglo-Jewish Exhibition to pay a visit to England. The year was a memorable one in Graetz's life. In 1887 he celebrated his seventieth birthday, and the congratulations that flowed in from all parts of the world proved that his fame was wide as well as deep. In his honour, a large number of the most distinguished Jewish scholars compiled a *Jubelschrift* (a form of publication that bids fair to become fashionable), in which they brought some of the fruits of their talent and industry to lay before Graetz as an offering. The volume, said its authors, was at once an act of a homage and a testimony; homage to the great Heaven-blessed historian, and a testimony that his contemporaries had not relegated to posterity the proclamation of his fame. “Of those who have contributed essays to

this volume, many are in a special sense pupils of Graetz ; but there is none on the list but is ready to acknowledge in Graetz his master." Though Graetz never sought applause, yet it was sweet to him when it came. His was that finest form of vanity that is too conscious of its own supreme claims to find praise needful or even fitting. But he was as warm-hearted as the genius of his race; his sympathies were quick, his interests wide. He did not need to unbend in society with ordinary folk as some scholars condescend to do; he was unbent by nature, he was as genial a companion as he was a painstaking student. His accomplished wife, who acted as her husband's secretary, and spurred on his ambition, was an amiable hostess, and Graetz's home was one of the most frequented in Breslau. His keen sense of humour made him an admirable society man; he was very ready with witty epigrams, while his fund of flowing anecdote was apparently inexhaustible. He thoroughly enjoyed telling a good story if the point was directed against himself, but he disliked scandal. He took a part in the local affairs of the Breslau Jewish community, unlike some other Jewish scholars who give up to their books what was meant for mankind. Thus Graetz was as ready to visit the Albert Hall in 1887 as he had been to go to Buda-Pesth with Dr. D. Rosin ten years before to represent Breslau on the inauguration of the new Jewish Seminary in Hungary.

Graetz was received in England with an extraordinary degree of cordiality. All were as amazed at his youthful elasticity of body and mind as they were charmed by his manner and his conversation. His presence gave the Exhibition completeness, and his lecture will, it may be hoped, become an inspiration for English-speaking Jews. Graetz had formed a strangely high estimate of the work that the Jews of England are destined to do for Judaism. Some have felt inclined to explain this by assuming that the magnificence of his reception in London coloured all that he saw, and led him

to an unduly flattering prophecy. But Graetz's lecture, as I have reason to know, was written before he left Germany, and a passage that he cancelled was perhaps more glowing in its hopeful tones than any that he uttered. Recently Graetz's prediction has been echoed by Mr. Schechter, and it will remain for the future to decide whether Graetz read aright the signs of the time when he fancied that they foretold how with the English-speaking Jews the future of Judaism lies. The last essays of the great historian were all written for England.

Graetz's visit to England coincided with the cessation of the *Monatsschrift*, but he himself suggested that the continuity was not long broken, for the JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW would take its place. The editors hardly aspired to so ambitious a success, but Graetz's hearty approval and his promise of active co-operation were strong factors in encouraging us to proceed. On two points he had long discussions with us. He applauded our intention to admit into our pages articles dealing with current religious controversies, but he was somewhat doubtful as to the practical consequences. His and our pains might have been spared, for we have not found ourselves exactly overwhelmed by the mass of controversial contributions offered to us. Graetz suggested that the new Review should be international, that the articles should be printed in the various languages in which their authors wrote them. But it was felt that the Review would look too grotesque with its contributors writing in English, German, French, Italian, and Hebrew. Graetz himself had a sufficient knowledge of English to read the language easily, and so have many Continental Jewish scholars. The example of the *Letterbode* was not one that suggested itself for imitation.

Another of the proposals that Graetz made during his English journey was one for the formation of a Jewish Academy. Two years before, he had written in his *Monatsschrift* of the need for an Encyclopædia of the Talmud to be undertaken jointly by a band of scholars. This pro-

posal he repeated at the Albert Hall, and he expanded it until it became a matured plan for a Jewish Academy. It is unnecessary to give the details of his scheme, for the time is not yet ripe to discuss them. Whether the proposal will ever take practical shape it is hazardous to predict.

The last years of Graetz's life were perhaps the most productive. His intellect betrayed no mark of decrepitude, and his latest work was also among his best. His Biblical researches were prosecuted with youthful vigour. His "History" received its finishing touches, and was in part rewritten. He saw his "Popular Edition" in German through the press, and he regularly revised the proof sheets of the English translation of his *Geschichte*. For this translation he composed a *Retrospect*, which contains the last lines that he wrote, and forms a testament bright with sure confidence in the permanency of the Mission of Israel. The pure rationalism that seeks to distinguish between the ethical and the mystical elements of religion can, according to Graetz, find no home outside Judaism. Judaism proclaimed the holiness of life, and made for all that may be summed up in the term humanity. Graetz never wearied of insisting on the moral influence of the monotheistic idea, but nowhere has he done this more powerfully than in the last *Retrospect* that he took of the history of his race. In its very poetry he saw a lever for the attainment of ethical culture, in its career an eternal token of the Divine Providence. Though in his later years he came to see more and more clearly that all religious traditions must be made the subject of strict scientific examination, though he came to think that the Bible itself was in a large sense the faulty work of man, he never ceased to believe in its inspiration, he never doubted that its underlying impulses to moral progress came direct from God. He saw the finger of God in the latest as in the earliest phases of Jewish history; in the events of the nineteenth century after, as in those of the nineteenth century before the Christian era. No one who fails to detect in it the

handiwork of Providence can write the history of the Jews ; and it is because the future will hardly give us again the same combination of religious love and scientific truth-seeking that Graetz's "History" will never be superseded. Graetz's own attitude towards contemporary Judaism was not that of a constructive thinker ; he will not be numbered among the great religious forces that have made Judaism what it is. He stood at the parting of the ways, and told the passers-by in each direction that they were all going on the wrong path ! But he will always remain an inspiration ; from his quarries will be dug the foundation stones on which the future of Judaism may be built. He wrote a History for the Jews—and the world at large has accepted it. He will be remembered as one to whom universal praise was but a new stimulus to higher effort, who, when at the summit of his unique repute, bestowed the same diligent and tireless care on his work as when his spurs were yet to win. His last essay was a protest against the verdict that "Judaism is a wandering secret." Graetz will stand foremost among those who made Judaism what he himself called it, "a wandering revelation."

I. ABRAHAMS.

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THE WRITINGS OF PROFESSOR H. GRAETZ,  
CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A list of Professor Graetz's works up to 1879, was given in the official report published in Breslau on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening of the Seminary (August 10th, 1879). The present list supplies some omissions and corrections, and continues it from 1879. Prof. Graetz's critical edition of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament will, it may be hoped, be soon issued. My thanks are due to M. Isidore Loeb, Dr. Neubauer and Prof. Kaufmann for kind assistance in completing this list.

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